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Government of South Australia

SA Ambulance Service Volunteer
Health Advisory Council

24 July 2014

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Hon Jay Weatherill MP
Premier of South Australia
Government of South Australia
GPO Box 2343
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The Hon Jay Weatherill,

Re – Reform of South Australian Boards and Committees

I write in response to your letter dated the 8th July 2014, regarding the reform of South Australian Government Boards and Committees.

The SA Ambulance Service Volunteer Health Advisory Council (SAASVHAC) is elected by volunteers from within SA Ambulance Service across South Australia. They have a vital advocacy role, advising SAAS management on matters pertaining to volunteers and the delivery of Ambulance Services in rural South Australia. This role is purely voluntary.

The process of election occurs every two years and starts with each individual ambulance branch, of which there are eighty, having two delegates elected to represent their branch at a Zone Ambulance Consultative Committee (ZACC). The State is divided into seven zones, who meet in most cases bi monthly, to discuss issues that may impact on volunteers either within their zone or at State level. Each zone then elects two delegates to SAASVHAC. The SAASVHAC delegate's role not only includes relaying information from zone to management but ensuring that the information flow from management is taken back to zone to disseminate to volunteers at a branch level. This vital role strengthens the relationship between management and volunteers who feel they are being consulted appropriately and their contributions adding value to the organisation.

The above process was implemented in consideration with the rules for the SAAS Volunteers Health Advisory Council which were determined by the Minister for Health pursuant to Section 17(3) of the Health Care Act 2008. Since 2008 this process has ensured that all volunteers have an opportunity to be part of a dynamic, proactive, purpose driven group that is focused on our volunteers and the delivery of best practice patient care in rural SA.

To ensure consistency in future years SAASVHAC has developed a Vision and Mission statement, an orientation package to assist new delegates to understand their role and responsibilities and a business plan that is reviewed after each election by newly elected delegates so that current issues are taken on board by the newly elected SAASVHAC group.

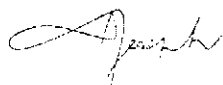
The SAASVHAC group also strongly advocates for communities to take ownership and become part of the solution in relation to the many services that are provided by volunteers in conjunction with Government such as Ambulance and CFS, etc.

In my role as Presiding Member, I have recently engaged with a number of SAAS volunteer teams to encourage them to form a Local Ambulance Committee to assist in community engagement, a method that has been proven successful in increasing SAAS volunteers in a number of communities.

The partnership between SAAS management and SAAS volunteers is cemented by mutual respect and a mutual desire to deliver best patient care to all of South Australia. It is our belief that this would be put in jeopardy by removing SAASVHAC - the established and vital link between management and those on the ground serving their communities voluntarily.

Please consider the continuation of this Council carefully as without an alternative to deliver the outcomes that are expected by both our volunteers and the wider community the culture that has been nurtured within SAAS as an organisation since the Council's establishment is likely to be impacted upon.

Yours sincerely,



Greg Joseph,
Presiding Member
SA Ambulance Service Volunteer Health Advisory Council

cc: *Hon Jack Snelling MP - Minister of Health*
Hon Zoe Bettison MP - Minister of Volunteers,
Hon Tony Piccolo MP - Minister of Emergency Service
Mr Robert Morton, Chief Executive Officer, SA Ambulance Service
Mr Steve Cameron, Chief Operating Officer, SA Ambulance Service